

STATEMENT OF SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE
VICE CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE
HEARING ON S.964
THE CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX
EQUITABLE COMPENSATION ACT
AUGUST 3,1999

GOOD MORNING. ON BEHALF OF CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL AND THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS, I AM PLEASED TO WELCOME THE WITNESSES WHO ARE HERE TO TESTIFY ON S.964, THE CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE EQUITABLE COMPENSATION ACT.

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR DASCHLE, S.964 IS ONE OF A SERIES OF BILLS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE LONG OVERDUE ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION TO THOSE NATIVE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES AND CULTURES WERE FOREVER ALTERED BY THE TAKING OF THEIR TRIBAL LANDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF DAMS AND RESERVOIRS AS PART OF THE MISSOURI RIVER PICK-SLOAN PROJECT.

IN 1948, THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS TOOK 104,000 ACRES OF PRIME BOTTOM LAND ON THE CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX RESERVATION TO CONSTRUCT OAHE DAM AND RESERVOIR.

THIS RESERVOIR INUNDATED FOUR RESERVATION COMMUNITIES AND REQUIRED THIRTY PERCENT OF THE TRIBE'S POPULATION TO BE RELOCATED.

THE LOSS OF RIVER BOTTOM LAND DEVASTATED THE TRIBE'S CATTLE, AGRICULTURE AND TIMBER INDUSTRIES, AND DEPRIVED THE TRIBE OF ACCESS TO A PRIME SOURCE OF POTABLE WATER.

SIMILARLY, THE PERMANENT LOSS OF ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL, HUNTING, GATHERING AND CEREMONIAL GROUNDS DEALT A TREMENDOUS BLOW TO THE TRIBE'S CULTURE AND TRADITIONS.

IN 1954, SIX YEARS AFTER THE LAND WAS TAKEN, LEGISLATION WAS ENACTED THAT, BY ANY FAIR MEASURE, FELL FAR SHORT OF PROVIDING ADEQUATE COMPENSATION TO THE TRIBE FOR ITS LOSSES.

TO FURTHER COMPOUND THE LOSS, THE TRIBE HAS ENJOYED LITTLE, IF ANY, OF THE FLOOD CONTROL, POWER, NAVIGATION, RECREATION OR OTHER BENEFITS FOR WHICH OAHE DAM WAS BUILT.

S.964 WOULD PROVIDE ADDITIONAL, EQUITABLE COMPENSATION TO THE CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE IN THE FORM OF A TRUST FUND IN THE U.S. TREASURY THAT WOULD BE CAPITALIZED WITH TWO HUNDRED AND NINETY MILLION DOLLARS.

THE TRIBE WOULD BE ABLE TO SPEND THE INTEREST EARNED ON THIS FUND TO IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO PROMOTE ITS ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, AS WELL AS THE EDUCATIONAL, HEALTH, AND SOCIAL WELFARE OF ITS MEMBERS.

SINCE 1991, THE CONGRESS HAS ENACTED THREE BILLS PROVIDING NEARLY THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS IN TRUST FUNDS AS ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR TRIBES ON FOUR OTHER RESERVATIONS AFFECTED BY THE MISSOURI RIVER PICK-SLOAN PROJECT.

THE AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION THAT THE CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE WOULD RECEIVE UNDER S.964 IS PROPORTIONATE TO THE COMPENSATION PROVIDED TO THE TRIBES OF THE FORT BERTHOLD, STANDING ROCK, CROW CREEK AND LOWER BRULE RESERVATIONS.

IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT WITH ENACTMENT OF S.964, THE YANKTON AND SANTEE SIOUX TRIBES WILL BE THE ONLY REMAINING TRIBES THAT SEEK ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR THEIR LOSSES FROM THE MISSOURI RIVER PICK SLOAN PROJECT.

I WANT TO COMMEND MY ESTEEMED COLLEAGUE AND LEADER, SENATOR DASCHLE, FOR HIS DILIGENT EFFORTS TO SECURE A BETTER CONCLUSION TO WHAT IS UNDOUBTEDLY A LESS-THAN-HONORABLE CHAPTER IN RECENT AMERICAN HISTORY.

SIMILARLY, I COMMEND SENATOR JOHNSON, FOR HIS SUPPORT FOR THESE EFFORTS TO PROVIDE SOME MEASURE OF JUSTICE TO THE MISSOURI RIVER TRIBES.